

III. Lifetime and Recent Tobacco, Psychoactive Prescription and Illegal Drug Use by Educational Status

Many similarities and some differences are observed by educational status in lifetime use (ever used) and recent use (any use in the past 12 months) of tobacco and other drugs besides alcohol (Table 3).

Tobacco:

Cigarettes are more likely to be used by school leavers than by stayers. Among smokers, school leavers smoke more cigarettes on an average day.

Lifetime and recent use of other tobacco products is also higher among school leavers.

Fifty-two percent of school leavers and 31% of stayers ages 18 to 34 in Tennessee have recently used some form of tobacco products.

"Pills":

Trends by educational status in psychoactive prescription drug use, including the use of sedatives, tranquilizers, stimulants, and painkillers, are inconsistent. **Recent use of sedatives and tranquilizers is higher for school leavers than stayers**, but their lifetime use of sedatives and tranquilizers is no higher for school leavers. **Lifetime use of stimulants or "speed" is higher among stayers**, but recent use is the same for both groups. **Lifetime use of painkillers (narcotics) is higher among stayers**, but recent use shows no significant difference.

Combining all categories of psychoactive prescription drugs, school leavers (28%) are no more likely to have used one or more such drugs within the past 12 months than stayers (27%). **School stayers are just as likely as school leavers to report non-medical use of such drugs**, defined as recent use of one or more psychoactive prescription drugs sometimes, often or always without a doctor's prescription or advice. Such nonmedical "pill" use or abuse was reported by 3.5% of school leavers and 3.3% of stayers.

Illegal Drugs:

The use of illegal drugs is no different in either group. School leavers are no more likely to report use of one or more illegal or illicit drugs than stayers. School leavers report no higher lifetime and recent use of marijuana. They report no higher lifetime use of cocaine and hallucinogens/lsd. Heroin was used in the past 12 months by so few respondents that educational status differences are non-significant. This is also the case for recent use of cocaine, hallucinogens/lsd, and inhalants.